

THE COST OF REVITALIZATION

BUILDING AND RENEWAL OF OUR COMMUNITY

By Mayor Gene Winstead

AGE AND USE HAVE AFFECTED SOME AREAS of Bloomington. The community needs to be constantly renewed; however, the City’s resources to do so are finite. We will use these resources wisely and may have to identify additional resources or other funding to enhance our community. The Council is taking the approach of rightsizing – that, is to figure out the balance between redevelopment’s costs and the benefits that it brings to everyone.

It is important to residents that their neighborhoods look good and fit their needs. They want the vacant gas station on the corner removed, more housing options and well-maintained streets. Revitalization of some areas of our community will only occur when the City pays for part of the costs.

According to the feedback I receive, residents also want to continue to receive City services that meet the many different needs of our community. Some residents use parks and picnic shelters often. Other residents’ priorities include youth activities or senior programs.

Local government is directly or indirectly responsible for the health and welfare of its citizens . Some services can’t be cut or cut back simply because they’re not profitable or not always used by everyone. Police and fire protection must be available round-the-clock and we don’t pick and choose which streets we will plow in order to save money. These services, similar to insurance, are there when you need them.

We have planned for a downturn and, as a result, the City has successfully

balanced its budget during these challenging economic times. With the loss of state aid and the downturn of the economy, local governments are faced with providing services to residents while still keeping taxes affordable. Finding ways to fulfill the City’s mission of “Building and Renewing the Community” is also more difficult.

The Council, however, knows the critical importance of renewing the community for the long term and has chosen five top redevelopment priorities for our city called the “String of Pearls.” See map below. Improving and investing in these areas not only revitalizes our community’s commercial areas, but also increases home values in the surrounding neighborhoods.

CITY REDEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES



These five areas have been called the “String of Pearls.”

FRANCE AVENUE AND OLD SHAKOPEE ROAD

Public improvements including street widening, new turn lanes, sidewalks, signals, medians and landscaping will begin this spring. A 4,000 square foot retail building was constructed last fall on the southeast quadrant of the intersection. The Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) has acquired the majority of properties in the redevelopment site. Proposals for redevelopment on the northeast corner are due to the HRA in February.

94TH STREET AND LYNDALE AVENUE

Construction is underway for Realife, a 96-unit senior cooperative scheduled for completion in August 2004.

84TH STREET AND LYNDALE AVENUE

The Housing and Redevelopment Authority, in partnership with United Properties, will construct a new Cub Foods store and 10,000 square foot retail center, 75 to 100 units of senior housing and 50 to 60 townhouses. Construction is scheduled to begin in May on the retail portion of the redevelopment.

AIRPORT SOUTH

This Mall of America expansion project on the former Met Center site includes a 2.25 million square foot integrated mixed-use center with retail, hotel, office and entertainment elements. Construction of a 330,000 square foot IKEA home furnishings store is underway on the site and is scheduled to open in summer 2004.

The City is working with McGough Development to construct a mixed-use, transit-oriented development located on the light rail transit line at Bloomington Central Station. Formal plans are expected to be submitted in February 2004 with first-phase construction to begin later in the year.

AREA AROUND BLOOMINGTON CIVIC PLAZA

Constructing Bloomington Civic Plaza revitalized a highly visible parcel at 98th Street and Old Shakopee Road and opened the door for other redevelopment in the area. For instance, the move freed up the old municipal building site at 2215 West Old Shakopee Road for redevelopment. Construction of 128 condominiums and 40 townhouses on the seven-acre site is valued around \$50 million and will result in a substantial increase in the City’s tax base.



BRIEFING

Volume 12, Number 1

The *Briefing*, published bimonthly by the City of Bloomington, is mailed directly to our residents and businesses. Direct comments to Communications Administrator Diann Kirby, City of Bloomington, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington MN 55431-3027; PH 952-563-8818; TTY 952-563-8740; FAX 952-563-8715; E-MAIL dkirby@ci.bloomington.mn.us. If you require Braille, larger print or computer disk, contact Diann Kirby.

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